

Table 1: Historical development of the bird collection in the Natural History Museum Vienna with main collectors and collections.

Year	Collector	Locality	Remarks
Period before 1806			
?1755	? JAQUIN	America	„old collection“, before 1806
[1772-1775]	[COOK 2 nd voyage]	various loc.	acquired 1806
[1776-1780]	[COOK 3 rd voyage]	various loc.	acquired 1806
1783	MÄRTER & BOOS	America	before 1806
1785	BOOS & SCHOLL	S-Africa	before 1806
1793 antea	NATTERER sen.	Austria	acquired 1793
1793 antea (?)	Rev. KRATKY	Austria	before 1806 pro parte
1797 antea (?)	SPALOWSKY	various loc.	1811 pro parte
[1803]	[BAUER-FLINDERS]	Australia	acquired ?1803, 1826
1804	ENZEL	America	before 1806
[1804]	[BAUDIN]	Australia	acquired 1815
1806 – First Inventory: 1,644 specimens			
1817-1835	NATTERER coll.	Brazil	12,000 specimens
1839	HÜGEL coll.	Himalaya, Australia	1,400 specimens
1857-1859	NOVARA-EXP.	(global)	1,300 specimens
1877-1889	REISCHEK coll.	New Zealand	2,700 specimens
1893-1927	POLATZEK coll.	Palaearctic	1,500 specimens
1903	REISER	Brazil	1,347 specimens
1906	TSCHUSI coll.	Palaearctic	7,000 specimens
1910	GRAUER coll.	C-Africa	6,000 specimens
1912	REISER coll. (eggs)	Palaearctic	12,000 specimens
1925	Archduke FRANZ FERDINAND	(global)	2,000 specimens
1937	ZIMMER coll.	E-Africa	2,000 specimens
1957	SCHIEBEL coll.	Palaearctic	2,500 specimens
1986	SEILERN coll.	S-America	3,000 specimens
Smaller collections have been acquired from ALMASY, BOJER, BOUCARD, C.L. BREHM, DEPPE, DEGLAND, DUFRESNE, EMIN PASHA, FINSCH, v. HAAST, HEUGLIN, HOCHSTETTER, KOTSCHY, LICHTENSTEIN, MALHERBE, A.B. MEYER, PFEIFFER, POEPPIG, PRZEWALSKY, SALVIN, SCHIEDE, SCHILLINGER, SCHLÜTER, SCLATER, STOLICKA, SWINHÖE, TEMMINCK, UNDERWOOD, VERREAUX and many others.			

bird department holds about 8,000 specimens, mostly complete loose skeletons (about 25% part skeletons or skulls). Flat skins, anatomical and micro slide preparations (e.g. egg shells), nests and DNA-samples amount to about 20,000 objects. The scope of the collection is world wide, about 75% of the presently known bird taxa are represented by single specimens or smaller series.

4. LOGISTICS

Holdings are arranged systematically following PETERS Check-list (1931-1987), using the subspecies level as organisational taxonomic unit. Revised label data for all specimens of the skeleton collection and mounts are available on a (department based) data-

base. About 80% of the egg collection, but only a very small part of the study skin collection, have been entered on a card file index. Data of extinct or endangered taxa (according to IUCN criteria) are also available electronically (<http://www.specola.unifi.it/EVA.htm>).

About 80% of the holdings are numerically catalogued in the bird department's inventory books. Main sources for information on collectors and the historical development of the collection are the acquisition entries, arranged chronologically from 1806 onwards („Acquisitionsbücher“), unfortunately not linked with the catalog numbers („Inventarnummern“), which were invented only about 1890 and follow no systematic or chronological order. A first list of type specimens, presently rather outdated, has been published by PELZELN & LORENZ (1886-1888), a revised and annotated type list will be available in the near future (SCHIFTER et al. 2003).

5. RESEARCH FOCUS

Collection-based research is traditionally focussed mainly on taxonomy and faunistics, involving morphology, biogeography and the history of collections and collectors as well. Geographic areas especially well represented in the collection are the Palaearctic, parts of the Afrotropic, Neotropic (mostly Brazil) and New Zealand. Current projects include the re-evaluation of label data based on various historic sources as well as on technical aspects involving x-ray examination (fig. 1,2), neutron-radiography and spectrum analysis. Another field of special interest is the taxonomy and ecomorphology of birds of prey including DNA-analysis (in cooperation with the Research Group for Molecular Systematics at the NMW). Research in connection with nature conservation projects is (at least in part) also linked with museum collections and collecting data.